

BLANCHE NO MORE: VOICE, LETTER, AGENCY

A Senior Honors Thesis

by

JANIECE ANNE MCGUIRE

Submitted to the Office of Honors Programs
& Academic Scholarships
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH FELLOWS

April 2002

Group: Art and Literature 1

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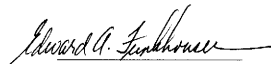
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April 2002

Group: Art and Literature 1

ABSTRACT

Blanche No More: Voice, Letter, Agency. (April 2002)

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Blanche No More: Voice, Letter, Agency seeks to locate, examine and trace the role of the author in culture. The subject of Authorship is one that is seemingly endless, therefore, Blanch No More: Voice, Letter, Agency will discuss ancient, medieval and modern views of authorship. The project will take a general view of the physical development of language and writing as well as examining the mythological development via the myth of Cadmus. Then Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* will be examined and compared with medieval theories on authorship. Finally, current theories, including feminist writings, will be discussed. The goal of this project is to illustrate the path towards authorship in a coherent and cohesive manner.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family and friends.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to: Paul, you got me through the tough times. My parents who provided me with the opportunity to attend Texas A&M as well as constant love and support in all my pursuits. Allison, my younger sister, who helped out in all the little ways. Megan and Michelle, my roommates who were both understanding and encouraging. And finally, many, many, thanks to Dr. Douglas Brooks for his constant motivation, support and understanding attitude.

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INTRODUCTION

The identification of Authorship has been a prevalent and persistent concern in Western Culture. Why? Authorship is the ultimate source of responsibility in our society. It is the place where all the influence of culture, family, and education collide and form into one coherent whole. Authorship is a source for locating cultural norms about ourselves, each other, and the world at large. The author and the reader interact to form the visions of the world that we all deem acceptable and silently agree to follow. The author is an important guiding force in our culture and is thus held accountable for the text he/she produces. When the author is missing, unavailable, or unreliable society becomes anxious and disturbed.

Blanche No More: Voice, Letter, Agency attempts to locate the source of this anxiety by reviewing the origins of writing and Authorship and identifying the continuing impact these developments have had on culture. The roles and responsibilities of the author are of supreme importance in both medieval and modern theory. Within Authorship one finds issues of law, gender, theology, technology and identification. These issues are not only important for defining texts, but also for attaching reliability to them. The role of Authorship has experienced a distinct evolution over time, and this project seeks to explore and identify aspects of that evolution. Specifically, the project will identify and trace scientific and mythic origins of writing,

medieval trends and theories in writing, modern theories, and some of the gender issues involved in the assertion of Authorship. These aspects combined will form an outlook that examines the social and psychological influence writing, and particularly Authorship, had and continues to have on customs and society.

The rationale for writing this project started with an interest in examining the evolution of authorial self-consciousness as it is manifested in a range of literary, historical, and philosophical writings. The project begins with an examination of the scientific and mythic evolutions of writing, wherein some of the most fundamental and persistent trends of Authorship are located. Later, Minnis's theories on medieval authorship will be contrasted with those of more modern critics including, but not limited to, Barthes and Foucault and others and a comparison of modern versus ancient notions of Authorship. Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* will play an important role as a transition point between the evolution of writing and the subsequent theories of writing due to the importance of Chaucer's body of work and authorial influence. Furthermore, the project will examine and identify trends in female Authorship. Feminine identity in a masculine world, the role of the oracle and the female serpent, and the development of both an oral and written voice will be discussed and contrasted to the aforementioned traditionally male-dominated realm of Authorship.

The project will conclude by addressing the fundamental issues of agency, authority and Authorship that arise time and again in literature. The path of the project is the formation of a coherent thesis that explores the characteristics and traits that combine together and become Authorship.

ANCIENT VIEWS OF AUTHORSHIP

A History of Language and Writing

The first major hurdle on the path to culture was the development of comprehensive written and verbal languages. Thus, it is important to present a brief explanation of the two central concerns of language, writing and Authorship, as well as a brief exploration of their depth, constancy and importance. This exploration is generously supported by the background and historical information provided by Steven Roger Fischer. The abovementioned aspects are the very underpinnings to the traditions of Authorship that this project seeks to explore and are thus of primary importance to the project as a whole.

Understanding language, “the world’s most fascinating faculty” (Fischer 7) and its evolution leads to an understanding of the history and tradition of writing and eventually Authorship. While it is not possible to cover the full history of both language and writing, some of the more persistent and integral aspects of authorship were established when culture was still learning how to communicate most effectively. Speaking and writing seem such natural acts to participants in society that it is hard to conceive that language is one of the most complex machinations of the human mind. Language is the truest sense of taking mental tools to consider and select symbols, and then expressing them through utterances of verbal sounds and gestures (Martin 2).

Fischer defines language, in its strictest definition as “the medium through which one conveys complex thought using arbitrary symbols—grammatical utterances or their

graphic expression—in a significant syntax” (Fischer 33). The phrase ‘significant syntax’ suggests the depth of neurological and creative power necessary to form a coherent thought and the ability to translate that thought to others in the group. Humans take it one step further and communicate their ‘significant syntax’ verbally one to another. Other animals use “a variety of combined communicative means, to get other creatures to obey in ways that are beneficial to the individual, the group, and the species” as hominids also do. However, “...language in the form of vocal communication as not only the basis for all social interaction but also the vehicle for sophisticated thought...” seems to only be seen in hominids (Fischer 34). In essence, hominids found the shortcut to communicating with and understanding one another. Only hominids have “evolved a ‘more elaborate communication’ that has yielded unprecedented benefits for its innovators.” When human and animal languages are studied, we do not seek their form of communicating, but tend to measure them by the limiting artifices of our humanness. (Fischer 33).

A chart in Fischer’s book (Fig. 1) outlines the development of language as following this pattern in evolution: 4.1 million years ago gestures and vocalizations were produced by the hunting-gathering *Australopithecus*; 2.4 million years ago *Homo habilis* was still utilizing gestures and vocalizations as his main form of communication.

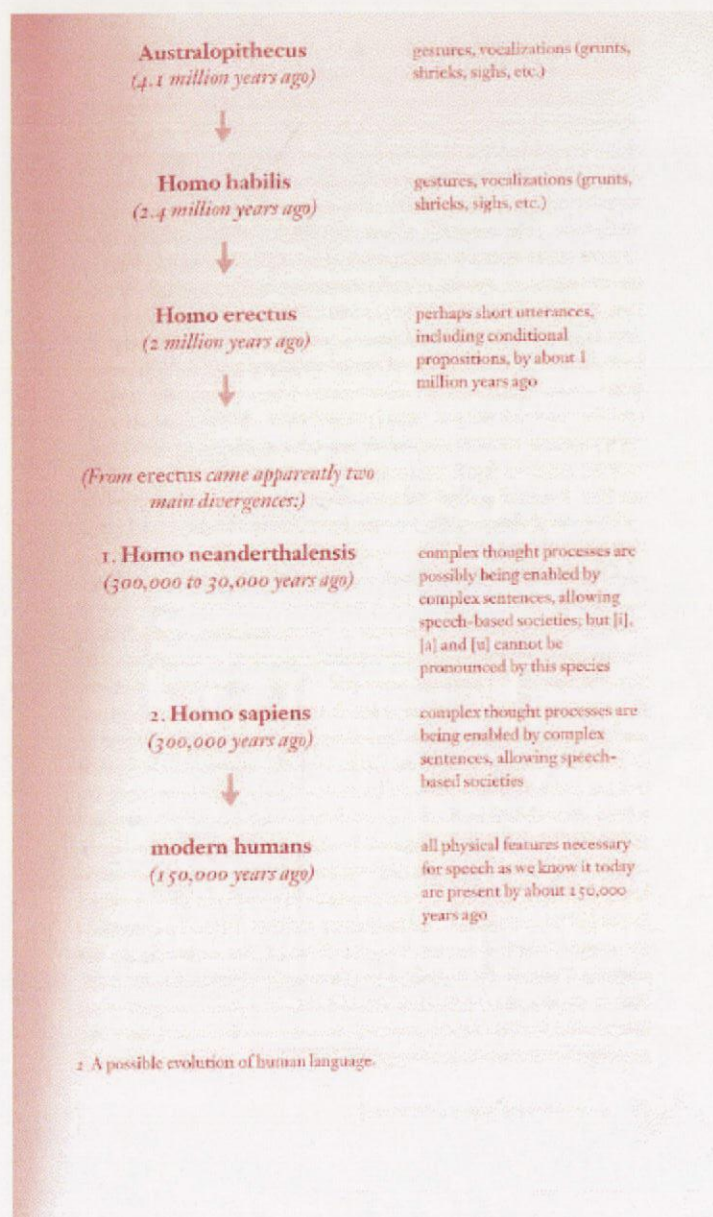


Fig. 1: Development of Languages. Fischer: A History of Language (55)

When Homo erectus evolved two million years ago they developed “short utterances” which they used for communication. Two human and language divergences came from Homo erectus—Homo neanderthalensis, who could perform fairly detailed thought processes but who still could not utter certain sounds, and Homo sapiens, who could

create “speech based societies” via “complex thought processes”. Finally, modern humans emerged, and by one hundred and fifty thousand years ago “all physical features necessary for speech” were present, but “modern human thought and language usage, as we know it today, was finally attained by homo sapiens” (Fischer 55). Early humans practiced simplistic forms of music, art, cherishing and enjoying nature, hunting, and rituals. The essence of language was used much as we use it today and eventually, “it was brain, not brawn, that now mattered” (Fischer 56). Helene Cixous teaches that all cultures must work with language and reflect on language since, “as soon as we exist, we are born into language and language speaks (to) us, dictates law” (Burke 166).

Once the basic mechanics of language (Fig. 2) were established the system began to adapt and change.

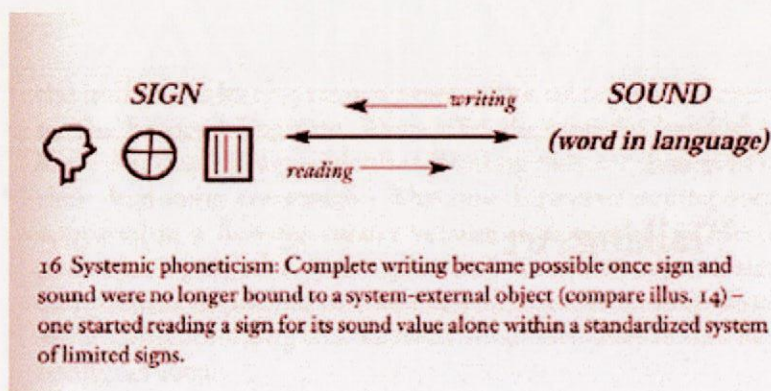


Fig. 2: The Mechanics of Language. Fischer: A History of Writing (33)

Languages traveled over geographic regions subtly fitting themselves to the unique and individual uses of the people of a specific culture. Languages, according to

Fischer are part of families, or “groups of languages that are genetically related...they display systematic correspondences in form and meaning not attributed to chance or borrowing” (Fischer 60). This means that language has something akin to heredity. Certain aspects of language that continually appear are present because they are an intrinsic part of that particular system – something along the lines of linguistic DNA. Three reasons for language commonality exist—“genealogical sharing, areal diffusion and chance typological commonality” with genealogical sharing being the main proof and reason for ‘family trees’ (Fischer 60). Family trees serve to provide the history of language by, “virtue of their origins and relationships” and by using, “grammatical forms and paradigms” (Fischer 61). All of this research and data suggests that languages, even entire families of languages, disappear simply out of necessity. Fischer suggests that “ever larger homogeneous linguistic units...suppress all smaller ones” and that “it is generally languages and not peoples that are replaced” (85). This ebb and flow of languages occurred constantly, as a fluid process that flexed with the needs of the culture. The cycle of filtration and erasure is a process that demonstrates ‘linguistic survival of the fittest,’ or in this case, domination of the most useful. Only those languages with the largest utilization managed to avoid being culled from or adapted to the culture. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of this process of addition and subtraction is that it goes unnoticed until writing systems emerge.

The journey from spoken language to written language is one of great depth and many variations. In *A History of Writing*, Steven Roger Fischer, states that “writing fascinates everyone”. Ancient writing intrigues the reader and becomes the ultimate

time machine by speaking to us in tongues long extinct (8). In our modern society, there are many forms to convey human speech, but writing has been exalted as a distinctive form of communication. (Fischer 11). Although scholars have not come to a consensus about the etiology of writing, there are three forms of criteria that all agree define writing. They are:

- * Having a purpose in communication;
- * Consisting of artificial graphic marks on a durable surface;
- * Marks that relate conventionally to articulate speech in such a way that communication was achieved. (Fischer, *Writing* 32,).

The oldest instance of writing was found in the “Fertile Crescent with ‘calculators,’ small clay objects that date back seven thousand years and that served to count sheep” (Henri-Jean Martin IX). Martin suggests that the “true inventors of Writing were the Egyptians...” who introduced phonetic representation of sounds via pictures but who did not take that development one step further. The Indo-Europeans and Semites developed the alphabet, the shortcut from spoken word to written communication.

Writing can be summarized in three stages: the pictogram, the ideogram, and the phonogram. The pictogram is an image that illustrates a realistic or historical event. Pictograms immediately produce the thought or word that the image signifies. The next step in the journey to writing is the ideogram. The ideogram is a grouping of images that signifies an idea or series of words that describe an abstract concept. Both the

pictogram and the ideogram depict things that actually exist, even if those things are used to express an idea in the abstract. The phonogram is a direct translation of the sound of a word to a visual representation of that word. Pictures were utilized only for their sounds, not for their realistic or actual existence. Combinations of pictures were used to create words that discussed not only an object's actual existence, but the thoughts and meanings infused in that object by the culture itself (Quaknin 79-85).

Writing, according to Fischer, is "the graphic expression of actual human speech" and serves to, by picture or letter, signify a physical idea or concept in the reader's mind (86). Three classes of script exist in written language: logographic script where a picture or 'glyph' signifies the smallest unit of language – a single morpheme; syllabic scripts which "have only syllabophonetic value;" and alphabetic script has letters that represent different spoken sounds and compress together to form words" (Fischer 87). Alphabetic scripts are different from the previous two because the alphabetic system, once in place, stayed in place. Writing, once developed, spread across many cultures and languages and adapted to fit the needs of individual peoples. Fischer suggests this happens because "the idea of the usefulness and mechanics of writing, whenever it began, then inspired neighbors to create their own similar writing systems, albeit graphically and phonetically unique" (Fischer, *Language* 87). Written language stands alone in uniqueness and usefulness.

According to Fischer, "writing systems are purposefully changed by human agents," unlike oral systems that seem to flex and grow on their own (Fischer, *Language* 88). Writing is more concrete and established and, on a large scale, must be changed or

adapted by a deliberate and conscious act of will. On a smaller scale, the one where copying mistakes are made and misunderstandings are normal, writing changes with out conscious intent, but is nonetheless changed via the power of a human hand, not some vague oral whim. Some of the first human agents who were writing were the scribes. The scribes Henri-Jean Martin focuses on are often shown in detail in bas-relief drawings. Interestingly enough the scribes are initially seen in uncomfortable positions taking notation on material that rests on their own bodies. The task of writing is one that involves the entire body. Martin notes that, “the desk, as we know it, was not commonly used until around the thirteenth century – well into the development of writing.” It is interesting and important to note the use of the human body as a writing aid at this early stage in the evolution of writing. This is a theme that will come into play as the technology of writing and traditions of Authorship continues to evolve (Henri-Jean Martin 60).

This early stage of writing is where ‘scribal culture’ emerges. Scribal culture is a deceptive term. It implies that a culture exists that is centered around scribal writings—well, this much is true—but the interesting part of that definition is *culture centered...around writing*. With this new and novel invention of writing that is comparatively so helpful and simple to use, culture must mentally, and sometimes physically, recreate itself. Out of this anxiety and scrambling for identity a whole new set of ‘creation’ mythologies emerges. However, there is one marked difference between these mythologies and those about the creation of the world—these explain the birth of writing.

Mythic Origins of Writing and Authorship

Mythology is an important way to establish the origin of writing. Several myths, from various mythological cultures exist that explain the development of writing in different belief systems. The myth of Cadmus, the Greek wanderer, establishes not only the development of the city of Thebes, but attributes to him the gift of the letters of the alphabet to the Greeks. The Cadmus myth explores the many adventures Cadmus must go through to establish the city, and thus the alphabet, as well as the consequences he suffers from this establishment and giving of this gift. Cadmus, called the Greek wanderer because of his expulsion from his homeland and his subsequent travels, establishes the city of Thebes after undergoing several adventures and ‘mini’ quests. Initially, Cadmus is cast out of his land to search for his sister, Europa, who has been captured to fulfill the sexual whim of Zeus. This first act of the myth immediately sets the undertone of sexuality that is present throughout the whole story. Sex, seduction, and fertilization all play extremely important roles in the development of the Cadmus myth. Zeus’ sexual whim forces Cadmus to leave his native land, and ironically it is on this journey to find his sister that Cadmus becomes the rescuer of Zeus.

Zeus has left Olympia without his usual godly form in order to commence with one of the many seductions of young maidens for which he is notorious. He leaves his celestial abilities behind because, as Roberto Calasso puts it, seduction “with a bundle of lightening bolts in one’s hand would be injudicious, and not even very exciting. But a white bull, an eagle, a swan, a false satyr, a stallion, a stream of gold, a blaze of fire: these are divine” (377). Zeus’ pursuit of divine seduction leaves him unprotected when

“Ge, the avenger” decides to initiate a coup of the Olympian throne. Ge’s son, Typhon, seizes the unguarded collection of lightening bolts and thus the power of heaven. All the Olympians flee and Zeus is captured, and immediately consequences can be seen.

Calasso states “Olympus was uninhabited now, a museum at night...already nature was slowly degenerating” (378-9). During Cadmus’ search for his sister, he stumbles across the cave where Zeus is hiding and initiates his first attempt at setting chaotic events back in their proper place. Cadmus however, initially has no idea the role he will play in the righting of Olympian order.

Cadmus’ role in the freeing of Zeus fulfills the sexual precedent that is set by the initial capture of Europa. Cadmus, who had, through the course of his journeys acquired much knowledge including, “the ineffable milk of books” and from Apollo, “the just music” (Calasso 379) decides to draw the monster Typhon out of the cave where he holds Zeus captive. With the “just music” Cadmus initiates the seduction of Typhon who, when listening to Cadmus play his pipes feels that “for the first time he understood how Zeus must feel when his eye settled on the breast and hips of a woman about to yield to him” (380). Typhon would have done well to remember what brought about the opportunity for the seizure of Zeus’ throne, for he is about to, under Cadmus’ music, fall prey to the same instinct—lust.

Zeus, via the seductive distraction Cadmus creates, is able to escape captivity and banish Typhon. Zeus is thankful that Cadmus has prevented “Hellas, mother of myths,” from “rearranging all of her fables, transferring to Typhon all those gratifying epithets of sovereignty that he himself had enjoyed until now” (381) and gives Cadmus a ‘gift’ that

in essence becomes another quest. Cadmus, as “the savior of the cosmic harmony” has earned the right to marry Harmony, but he must first find her. Cadmus’ important role in the Zeus/Typhon escapade is not only one of restoring the hierarchy to the heavens, but is also one about keeping the correct lineage intact. This emphasis on maintaining the lineage is why, when Cadmus finally finds Harmony, he not only tells the tale of his travels, but also details his heritage. His lineage, like that of Zeus, must be rigidly and repetitively adhered to in order to establish validity and confirm generational identity. His story must be told with his lineage because much of Cadmus’ personality and ability is derived from the combination of the two. It is paramount that Harmony, as well as her adoptive parents, knows that Cadmus is a man of worth. As a wanderer, the only way Cadmus can provide merit of his worthiness is via words. These illustrative words are necessary to demonstrate his past acts and the promise of the future to his reluctant bride. Cadmus has not yet completed his quests or given his amazing gift to the Greeks.

Sexuality and seduction play a role in Cadmus’ courtship and future marriage to Harmony. Harmony, despite divine edict, does not want to go with Cadmus. The description of Cadmus is less than impressive: “he was a drifter, a fugitive, a sailor, a man with no hearth nor home” (Calasso 383). Despite his lineage and adventures, Cadmus has not impressed Harmony enough for her to accept him. These stories of lineage are important to establish the validity of Cadmus’ personality and ability. However, instead of winning his bride on by his personal attributes, once again, sex and seduction are the deciding factor. Harmony is not seduced by Cadmus, but instead her friends verbiage. As her friend’s words describe the sailor Harmony “realized

something was changing in her: she was falling in love with her friend's desire" (Calasso 383). Again, seduction is what makes the action progress. Harmony, sexually awakened by her friend's lust, is able to continue with Cadmus on what has become their journey. Harmony suddenly "understood what myth is, understood that myth is the precedent behind every action, its invisible, ever present lining" (383). As the sexually aware Harmony is leaving her parents home, she picks up a "handful of earth and raised it to her lips" (Calasso 384). This kiss of the earth is the foreshadowing of the fertility that will be searched for and found in Thebes.

Harmony and Cadmus, despite their eventual devotion to each other, remain chaste and choose not to consummate their marriage until after their arrival in Thebes. However, before they arrive in Thebes they must first visit the oracle at Delphi. The oracle tells Cadmus he must forget his search for his sister, because her captor is not from the earthly realm. At Delphi the oracle instructs Cadmus that he must forget his homeland, and his father (not his mother), and follow a heifer that will fall where he is fated to settle and start a city. It is important to note that the oracle at Delphi plays a crucial role in the establishment of the mythic origins of writing. The oracle is essential a female voice directing settlement and perhaps ultimately the development of letters. When Cadmus reached the land promised to him he, "kissed the foreign earth and greeted the mountains and fields that he had never seen before" (Warner 7). Cadmus soon realizes there is one rather large problem with the site. It is home to the sacred dragon of Ares who has already killed some of Cadmus' men. Cadmus immediately decides that he must end the large female serpent's reign of terror. He smashes the three

tongued dragon by smashing the its head with a rock—in essence crushing the thought-center. In this battle between Cadmus and the dragon two other forces are also at work. Pallas Athena is Cadmus' protective goddess and the dragon is sacred to Ares. Both gods are connected with war, but both use a vehicle of the opposite sex to wage war against the other. Perhaps this suggests a fundamental difference between the way men and women wage war. The dragon's possession of the land ends at the same time as her life, but the significance of the female snake in the already symbolically important earth continues. The earth embodies the traits of growth, wealth, productivity, and fruitfulness and once the dragon is gone Cadmus is able to fully possess these aspects for himself.

In Calasso's reading of the myth Cadmus' next task is the construction of his and Harmony's marital bed. The bed is where they will consummate the upcoming marriage and will physically enact the cycle of fertilization of the land. At their wedding the gods appear and Iasion, Harmony's brother, sexually intrigues Demeter. When Zeus notices they are gone he steps outside and looks over to a "deep furrow in the black soil [where] he saw two bodies tight together, furiously clasping each other and mixing with the earth" (Calasso 387). Again, human sex and fertility is directly related to that which is inherent with the growth, sowing and reaping of the earth.

Rex Warner's version of the Cadmus myth has Cadmus' patron goddess Pallas suggesting to Cadmus that he plant the dragon's teeth in the soil. He does so and from those teeth grown armed soldiers spring up and conduct a civil war among them. Once this is finished Cadmus has the occupants for his city. The earth, in this version, plays a double role. First it is plowed and planted and then its children, the soldiers engage in

Thebes's first war and subsequently become its first inhabitants. An interesting parallel seen between the remaining soldiers and the vowels of the alphabet is strongly visible here. Since Cadmus is seen as the father of writing, one can make the connection between these five essential citizens to the five essential vowels. The similar roles of the plow and the pen are also important in this essential harvest of citizens and vowels. Both the plow and the pen cut rows on a solid surface; from each of their tips spring life; and each is among the most important tools of the craft to those who use them. The plow and the pen, the soldiers and the vowels, and the dragons and the earth all combine together to strongly tie the Cadmus myth to the mythical origins of writing.

Harmony's wedding gift, a necklace in the shape of a snake, reminiscent of the one Cadmus had already slain, and Iasion's sexual rendezvous with Demeter have ramifications in the family's entire progeny. The consequences of being involved with the Gods are the stories that result, contrived by the gods, because "gods get bored with men who have no stories" (Calasso 387). Cadmus' story still has many paths to follow, but the ramifications from the gods' presence at his wedding will be felt long into his old age. Cadmus' forced quests, his search for his sister, his marriage to Harmony, and the founding of Thebes bring both wonderful results and amazing consequences. Cadmus, according to Calasso, had brought to the Greeks the "gifts of the mind," vowels and consonants yoked together in tiny signs, "etched model of silence that speaks"—the alphabet" (390). He did all of this without weapons and in another telling, "Cadmus had no weapons, bar the invisible resources of his mind" (Calasso 379). Despite the consequences of his interactions with the gods "no one could erase those small letters,

those fly's feet that Cadmus, the Phoenician had scattered across Greece, where the winds had brought him in his quest for Europa carried off by that bull from the sea" (Calasso 391).

Cadmus' importance to the mythic establishment of writing is one that cannot be overlooked. The myth purports to be the origin of traditions and practices that would later be seen in many other works. This myth also served to take the cultural happenings and translate them into a cohesive tale that explained changing times, and by nature of writing, cemented them. Another tale that served a similar function for its time was Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*. A new vernacular was emerging and the now established role of the author was undergoing scholastic scrutiny. The anxieties of the time needed to be squared away and Chaucer's work was the perfect vehicle for this process.

MEDIEVAL VIEWS OF AUTHORSHIP

The Writing of Chaucer and Authorship as a Profession

Geoffrey Chaucer wrote the *Book of the Duchess* between 1369 and 1372, using the technique of elegy as the format for his poem. The use of elegy emphasizes the lament of the Black Knight as well as the hapless and naive nature of his confidant, the dreamer. Through the vehicle of elegy the two are allowed to communicate with one another and finally understand the other's perspective. Elegy permits the allaying of the Knight's grief and the maturation of the dreamer. However, the format alone does not account for the powerful nature of what is considered to be "the earliest of Chaucer's major poems" (Riverside Chaucer 329). As an author, Chaucer (fig. 2) explores new facets and creates a model that becomes a powerful work dealing with death and grief. The use of elegy as well as Chaucer's personal Authorship combine to form a first work that demonstrates the unique power of the author.



Fig. 3:Chaucer. Rpt. "THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS: AN ELEGY OR ATE DEUM?" Available via Internet.

The *Book of the Duchess* was written to commemorate the death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, wife of John of Gaunt. The poem, usually regarded as written shortly after Blanche's death, may have in fact been written later for a commemorative ceremony (Riverside Ch 329). Phillipa Hardman suggests, "The poem can be read as a universal statement about beauty, love, and loss" (206). In the *Book of the Duchess* Chaucer borrows freely and draws inspiration from other authors. The poem, often described as a "poetic monument to [John of Gaunt's] grief," does not "presume to console Gaunt for his loss but presents him with a poetic monument to his grief" (Hardman 205-6). This monument will immortalize Blanche and Gaunt's perfect love as well as Chaucer's eloquent capture and presentation of that love. The poem's format, an

elegy written in the French love tradition, is itself one of the more significant things Chaucer appropriated for his work. In fact, some assume that his early translation of the French poem *Roman de la rose* was, along with his commissioning by John of Gaunt, the source of his inspiration (Riverside Ch 329-30).

The *Book of the Duchess* is problematic. First, there is the dreamer who cannot sleep and has not slept in several years. Chaucer's concern with other texts is also an important factor. And finally there is the communication difficulties experienced by the narrator and the Black Knight, which, in the end, are resolved and lead to an ending where the problems of the text are resolved and the Black Knight finds peace.

Once the dreamer drifts off to sleep with assistance from the text of *Seys and Alcyone* he enters an unfamiliar and mysterious realm—the world of the dream. It is important to note how the dreamer finally arrives in the dream world. His movement from waking to sleeping is one that has been elusive for “eight yeer” (37). The dreamer states, “So when I saw I might not slepe/ Til now late this other night,/ Upon my bed I sat upright/ And bad oon reche me a book” (44-47). He reaches for Ovid's *Seys and Alcyone* hoping that it will ease him into sleep. Instead of directly quoting Ovid or sticking to his text, Chaucer chooses to modify the text and adapt it for use in the *Book of the Duchess*. Carol A. N. Martin suggests, “Chaucer does not only simplify the moral, but also the language of his textual precursors” (100). Indeed, this adaptation serves to “set a tone of conjugal love appropriate for the poem's reader, John of Gaunt” and allows “Chaucer to pay his patron a subtle compliment on the quality of his love that

becomes apparent once we see the analogy by which Seys' tenderness towards Alcyone represents the Black Knight's towards the Fair White" (Bahr 47).

Chaucer's authorial choice to alter Ovid's text significantly affects the path of the story. Chaucer's *Seys and Alcyone* serves a specific purpose: to advance the story and establish the correctness of Blanche's relationship with the Knight. John Lawler clarifies Chaucer's need to define the boundaries of the Black Knight and the Fair White's relationship. For the sake of courtly conventions Chaucer would have had to turn the marriage of John of Gaunt and Blanche into an extra-marital affair, "and it would never do to have the Duchess give herself a lover, the affair must be presented as a love in which the desires of the flesh could not be satisfied and must be sublimated" (Lawler 630).

Chaucer also allows the dreamer to interrupt the new Alcyone that he has created. The dreamer, also the narrator of the *Book of the Duchess*, interrupts to limit the time spent on the lovers' lament, thus putting it off until the introduction of the Black Knight. Bahr contends, "Chaucer's tactful modifications to his sources make the poem more flattering to his patron" (49). The lamentation is put off because the John of Gaunt figure, the Black Knight, must be the one to grieve. Chaucer makes authorial choices to best use the *Book of the Duchess* as a vehicle to flatter his patron while also creating a legitimate literary work. When he interrupts, the dreamer does not know he will encounter the Black Knight because he has not yet fallen to sleep. Lamentation must come from within the narrative and must be part of the dream world. Chaucer's adaptation of *Seys and Alcyone* and the dreamer's prayer to Morpheus, where he offers

gifts “to make me slepe and have some reste” (245), open up the corridor to the dream world and allow both the dreamer and the narrative to step inside.

Once in the dream world the dreamer looks around and sees murals on the walls that depict both the story of Troy and the *Roman de la Rose*. The *Roman de la Rose* is on the wall in “bothe text and glose” (333) perhaps harkening back to Chaucer’s own version of the story in his translation from French to English. These walls illustrate the oral and literary past that influence Chaucer as well as illustrate “topics that are linked with tragedy in medieval understandings of the genre” (Fradenburg 574). The walls are also similar to the pictograms seen in the early stages of writing. Perhaps the walls can be viewed in the same way as the pictographs—they are building blocks for the tradition in which the writer is trying to establish himself. D. Vance Smith discusses the use of space in the *Book of the Duchess* suggesting that, “It is entirely appropriate for a poem that is itself a commemoration to begin at the origin of Western secular memory by suggesting a plentitude of narrative, yet suppressing it—Troy, that is, as the location for the necessary failure of memory” (389). The stories presence in the *Book of the Duchess* is both a significant nod to the tradition in which they were written as well as a way for Chaucer to establish his own validity.

The *Book of the Duchess* is one of Chaucer’s first works and he is seeking to establish both the work and himself in the same realm as the books to which he has thus far referred to in the story. This self-conscious need is also why Chaucer chooses to create the idyllic perfection of the dream world. When the dreamer wakes in the dream world he hears the birds singing that, “Was nowhere herd yet half so swete,/ nor of

accord half so mete" (line 315-16). Then, when the dreamer looks outside he sees "the welken was so fair--/ Blew, bright, clere was the ayr./ And ful attemptre for soothe hyt was:/ for nother to cold nor hoot yt nas, Ne in al the welken was a clowde" (339-43). In the story Chaucer also seeks to establish the perfection of the Black Knight and the Fair White's love, thus leading to the question "What shall balance all this perfection?" Lawler contends that it is the consolation of the Knight by the dreamer that will provide the balance (634). The author who left such a legacy was himself seeking and finding inspiration in others' work.

Glenn Steinburg writes, "Chaucer's elegy arises out of an idiom of courtly decorum, out of an assumption of respect for privilege and an abiding faith in an art as an ennobling and enabling medium" (130). Elegy also provides education to the characters. It is via this mode that the characters are finally able to understand each other. This method serves to show "the dreamer and the reader to true, reliable knowledge of the meaning and depth of the Knight's sorrow and makes possible affective acknowledgements not available to the dreamer initially" (Steinberg 132). Ultimately, because of the characteristics of elegy the Knight and the dreamer are allowed to finally understand and have a complete knowledge of each other's problems. One must wait until the end of the elegy in order for the Knight and the dreamer to "learn to mean exactly what they say and say exactly what they mean" (Shaw 108). Chaucer's method of writing allows the characters to achieve understanding about their situation. This is exactly what the Black Knight seeks to accomplish when he tells the dreamer about his chess game against Fortune. In fact, the chess game allows the

reticent, sorrowful Knight to “draw a circle of words around his meaning, not because he is indifferent to a loss that he makes the subject of an intellectual game, but because he suffers from an excess of concern” (Shaw 108). The spoken word furthers the understanding of both the characters and the readers, giving it importance equivalent to that of the written word.

Chaucer’s authorial choices, the use of elegy included, provide an interesting and well-developed lament. John of Gaunt’s loss needs to be conveyed in an eloquent yet firm manner. It is absolutely necessary for Chaucer to alter Ovid’s *Seys and Alcyone* so that the relationship between the Black Knight and the Fair White can be preserved. The *Book of the Duchess*, the first of Chaucer’s major poems, is characterized by the inventiveness that would come to define Chaucerian works. The link between Authorship and elegy is one of Chaucer using a mode developed by someone else, adapting it and then making it definitively his own.

One final, but essential characteristic of the *Book of the Duchess* is the use of Blanche’s body. Blanche (fig. 3), the dead wife of John of Gaunt, provided the perfect surface on which for Chaucer to was able to create one of his early works. In the same way the scribes of the early stages of writing twisted themselves in to odd and uncomfortable shapes to write on their own bodies, Chaucer twists the death and body of Blanche to fulfill his authorial needs. Blanche provides Chaucer with the opportunity to not only please his patron, but to accomplish an authorial feat – a opportunity Chaucer seizes. Just as Cadmus’ plow cut across the rich earth, Chaucer’s pen cuts across the white body that Blanche provides.



Fig. 4: Blanche. Rpt. "THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS: AN ELEGY OR ATE DEUM?" Available via Internet.

Medieval Theories of Authorship

The previous examples of writing illustrate the origins and trends in writing as well as some themes of Authorship. Sean Burke suggests that "the oldest conceptions of Authorship view literature as either an imitative or an inspirational discourse" (5). Imitation and inspiration are two very different perspectives to maintain on the same outcome suggesting, that initially, even as today, culture did not know quite what to make of the role of the author. The inspirational view of literature is one that "elevates the poet or author as an elect figure—set apart from the rest of humanity via the gift of a divine afflatus—but deprives the author of the role of origination force" (5). This concept produces an interesting identity crisis for the author—does one accept a divine role, one that is admittedly elevated above others, or does one deny that aspect of writing

and assert their own role as a creator of text? Actually, the imitative view of Authorship suggests that the author does neither. Instead, this tradition promotes two other ideas on Authorship, mimesis and an expertise in one area of tradition. The first imitative view of Authorship, mimesis, is developed by Plato and Aristotle, “the former negatively in terms of the artist copying a natural world which was itself a copy of the higher realm of Ideas; the latter positively as a representation of significant action” (5-6). The second imitative idea is one where the author becomes “adept within the tradition rather than the elect of an inspirational calling” (6). Both the inspirational view and the imitative view discount, or even ignore, the role of the author as a creator, and, instead of moving closer to this view, as, looking back with modern eyes, one might expect, culture, especially Christian culture, moved further away. Christian culture specifically embraced the inspiration aspect of literature and “reconciled [it] with that of autonomous truth via the notion of *auctoritas* or authority derived from God” (7). Thus, the notion of individuality was completely removed from this literary tradition while still giving the *auctores* the status of being somewhat otherworldly and most definitely divinely inspired.

A.J. Minnis presents arguments denying the validity of modern literary theory when applied to medieval literature. Minnis acknowledges that “major aspects of medieval texts” exist that cannot be fully understood from other primary sources, and thus, secondary, used in this instance to mean modern, sources are used to illustrate perceived principals of medieval Authorship. Minnis maintains that this is a false comparison and poses the idea that new texts, rather than the few that are traditionally

analyzed in scholarly fashion, must be examined for the, “medieval theory of Authorship, i.e. the literary theory of *auctor* and *auctoritas*” (Burke 23). These terms can be further clarified via Minnis’s explanation of the terms as they would have been known to “medieval grammarians”(Minnis 10). *Auctor*, was had a relationship with four Latin and Greek sources: the Latin *agere*, ‘to act or perform’, *augere* ‘to grow’, *auieo* ‘to tie’, and the Greek *autenium* meaning ‘authority’ (Minnis 10). Minnis pulls these terms together to suggest that the “*auctor* ‘performed’ the act of writing. He brought something into being, caused it to ‘grow’”, *auctors* were also expected to be able to ‘tie’ their ideas and themes together and, eventually, to present their work in an authoritative manner (Minnis 10). Minnis, when using the terminology ‘medieval’ is focusing on the dates from 1100 to 1400. This information will, perhaps, help us identify the literary theory under which Chaucer was working as well as locating the birth of some of the traditions that are so firmly ingrained in modern authorial theory.

Theory in the singular form, rather than the plural theories, can be used in describing medieval authorial tradition, “because of the high degree of consistency with which medieval scholars treated the subject and employed its characteristic vocabulary” (Burke-24). However, Minnis clarifies that this theory was not narrow or stagnant. It covered a wide range of works that differed in genre and features of Authorship. Literary analysis was, for medieval scholars, a serious and important issue that was governed by a pattern of analysis and observation. The preferred method of the twelfth century was performed using a series of headings: “the title of the work, the name of the author, the intention of the author, the material or subject-matter of the work, its mode of

literary procedure, its order or arrangement, its usefulness, and the branch of learning to which it belonged" (Burke 26). The texts of Ovid, one of which Chaucer uses at the beginning of the *Book of the Duchess*, underwent this strict and detailed analysis. This suggests that Chaucer was, in fact, very aware of the literary analysis that the works of his predecessors underwent and this perhaps contributed to his own literary self-consciousness. Minnis clarifies the subject of the influence of medieval scholastic literary criticism even further noting that through propagation of literary theory many authors, Chaucer included were influenced in the "attitudes...[they] had towards the moral and aesthetic value of their creativity, the literary roles and forms they had adopted and the ultimate function which they envisaged their works as performing". He also points out that Chaucer had to have had a fair knowledge of literary theory because he "often reacted against the literary theory of his day, or he exploited it in a very unusual way..." (Minnis 6-7).

The thirteenth century brought about another development in the tradition of literary/authorial criticism. The " 'Aristotelian prologue' was based on four major causes": the *Causa efficens* wherein the role of the *auctor* as "the person who brought the literary work into being" would be discussed, the *Causa materialis* where his materials, or sources, were discussed, the *Causa formalis* where "his literary style and structure would be considered as twin aspects" (Burke 27) and the *Causa finalis* where the *auctor's* reason for writing, final literary goal, or justification of the work would be discussed (Minnis 28-29). Minnis points out that this may seem to be a strict and contrived method for literary criticism, but in fact it began actually to illustrate some of

the personal aspects of authors, rather than just maintaining a central focus on the text alone (Burke 27). It is important to note here the use of the prologue as a method for exploring literary theory—the prologue was originally a lecture that detailed “...the text as a whole, and outlin[ed] the doctrinal and literary principles and criteria supposed to be appropriate to it” (Minnis 14). Minnis takes a close look at some of Chaucer’s work to illustrate both the influence of literary theory on writers and to demonstrate the new, more personal relationship between scholar and author.

Chaucer is unique in his use of literary theory because he “did not employ any of the traditional prologue-paradigms” but “many of his literary attitudes seem to have been influenced by scholastic literary theory” (Minnis 190). In essence Chaucer used his knowledge of literary theory and made a willful choice to be unique. This is the same sort of will as was seen in the early adaptations of the written word—a standard existed and a person or group of persons made an informed decision to violate or change that standard. Chaucer is so aware of his role as an author that he feels comfortable, “[exploiting] the compilers’ typical justification of their characteristic role as writers...” (Minnis 191). Recall that the utilization of the prologue clears up any doubt of the identity of the writer as well as illustrating the distinct literary purpose of his work. Chaucer begins to subtly use the role of the author to distance himself from his characters and their actions. In *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer is only repeating “the words of other men as accurately as he can, without being responsible for what they say” (Minnis 198). Chaucer somehow manages to maintain authorial possession—he is known to be the writer of the book—without following the rules of the prologue and

without taking responsibility for his characters' actions; thus the "*intentio* ('entente') of the compiler is stated to be a good one" even if the actual words of the compiled work might be offensive (Minnis 199). This interesting device also serves to shift the author's responsibility for the reader's grasp of the works to the readers themselves. Minnis points out that it "may be argued that Chaucer treats his fictional characters with the respect that the Latin compilers had reserved for their *auctores*" (Minnis 203). Thus, Chaucer, through his knowledge of literary theory manages to twist early theory and traditions to his own, unique uses. Instead of using contemporary sources, Chaucer took their information and bent it to his own purposes, therefore lending it authority. In short, Chaucer uses sources from modern writers but ascribes them to ancient writers to create for himself a legitimacy of antiquity. Minnis suggests that Chaucer so worked the traditions to his own prestige that "one is led to suspect the presence of a very self-conscious author who was concerned to manipulate the conventions...for his own literary ends" (Minnis 210).

MODERN VIEWS OF AUTHORSHIP

Modern Theories of Authorship

Modern theories of Authorship differ from the theories Minnis attempts to apply to medieval works. Authorship, in modern times, is central to cultural ideas about identity, patriarchy, theology, authority, voice, letter, and agency to name a very few. Roland Barthes's *The Death of the Author* is perhaps the starting point for the current preoccupation with Authorship. Sean Burke suggests in 'Reconstructing the Author' that Barthes "served to remind us of the extent to which the history of our thought is bound up with conceptions of what it means to author a text" (xvi). Barthes suggests that "the author is a modern figure, a product of our society..." produced and maintained by a 'capitalist ideology'. Barthes notes that the reason and explanation for texts is always sought from the author, as if "his person, his life, his tastes, his passions" are of superior importance to the text. Writing, according to Barthes's definition is, "that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (Burke 125). This is an astonishingly different definition from the one seen when writing emerged, now distance and loss of identity from the body are involved. The body used to be of primary importance for writing, a tool of sorts that facilitated the writing process and now Barthes argues that the 'very identity' of the body must be lost before writing can begin—a profound and marked difference between the ancient and modern tradition of writing. Barthes's theory suggests that the author must die completely before writing

can start. The author's role, that of planning, creating, feeding the book, acting to "his work as a father to his child" must disappear to be replaced by the role of the 'modern scriptor' (Burke 127). The modern scriptor is someone who is birthed in identity at the same time his work is birthed in concept. The scriptor does not carry on his shoulders the burden of creativity the author does, but instead is equipped with an "immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does anything more than imitate book..." (Burke 128). Thus, Barthes transfers responsibility for meaning to the reader, not the author. The reader must be born only when the life of the author is conceded (Burke 130).

The name of the author is significant in its own right. There is his given, or 'proper' name, which signifies his basic identity and assigns ownership to the things that he owns or creates, whether it be a home or a book, and there is his 'authorial' name. The authorial name is not only the name seen on the title page of a publication, but is also the name that carries the meaning of the author's body of work behind it. This name is significant because it suggests what the author is about, what his work signifies, what his importance and authorial identity is. The name of the author also becomes a function of the discourse that is taking place within the text the author produces. Thus, "...unlike the proper name, which moves from the interior of a discourse to the real person outside who produced it, the name of the author remains at the contours of texts—separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence. It points to the existence of certain groups of discourse and refers to the status of this discourse with a society and culture" (Burke 235). However, not every

written text has this version of an author; instead they may have a creator, originator, or a writer. One does not think of a casual handwritten note or an advertising leaflet as having an author. Authorship, in our culture, functions to include some types of work and exclude others. Indeed, “the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society” (Foucault 235).

Foucault identifies four aspects of the discourse that can be applied only to books or texts with ‘authors’ in the sense defined above:

- 1) Authors and their texts are objects of appropriation.
- 2) Author function is not universal or constant in all discourse.
- 3) Author function is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual.
- 4) It results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. Author is a particular source of expression who, in more or less finished forms, is manifested equally and so forth.

These four features greatly help expand and define Foucault’s theory as it relates to the author’s function in culture. The first aspect refers to the author’s ability, or inability, to own or possess his works, suggesting that it was not until the copyright laws were enacted that, “the transgressive properties always intrinsic to the act of writing became the forceful imperative of literature” (236). The second aspect suggests that the function of the author is not always the same across time, place, and culture but is rather

a changing and evolving role. Via the third aspect a construct is formed that allows culture to assess “an individual’s ‘profundity’ or ‘creative’ power...” (237). Finally, the fourth aspect illustrates that the author is equally recognized in all forms of his writing.

Feminist Criticism

The authorial voice of women is something that has traditionally been difficult to find. The voice of women seems very well hidden, if not non-existent. However, the modern criticisms of authorship have fueled discovery and criticism of the female voice or lack of voice. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note that, “...those who reproduce the species have never controlled the production of culture” (22). This observation, incongruous as it may be, is true. The comparison between the volume of works generated by male authors and those generated by female authors is not ignorable. What explains this? Critics are generating work that examines this gross inconsistency in the role in culture between male and female writers. However, this is not an easy subject to explore. Feminist critics will always deal in political terms because “authorship involves the appropriation of cultural space and serves to underpin the principle of the literary canon which – on feminist thought – has been defined in patriarchal prejudice” (145). Women writers and authors are by this definition of the traditions of the literary canon put on a lower level of importance. Men hold the keys to the literary castle so they are the true authors, thus making women’s writing less important and the idea of female Authorship remote. Three phases describe the feminist movement:

- 1) the assertion by the female author of the right of belonging to the state and estate of Authorship;
- 2) the attempt to redefine Authorship over and against the patriarchal model and to promote a counter-canon of female authors;
- 3) the recognition that Authorship and canonicity are inherently and inalienably patriarchal institutions beyond which feminist thought should pass.

These three phases defined by Burke can be classified respectively as “sponsorial, revisionist, and theoretical in regard of the author-question” (145). Once the problem with the authorial canon was identified it was then necessary to reevaluate and revise the traditional views of Authorship. Hélène Cixous notes that when women are compared to men a “classic opposition” exists, “dualist and hierarchial. Man/Woman automatically means great/small, superior/inferior... means high or low, means Nature/History, means transformation/inertia” and essentially it has meant author/non-author (165).

However, one positive aspect central to the male-centric writing traditions is that “where the male writer is overwhelmed by the already-written, the female author has all too few precursors and is therefore involved in the creation rather than the misreading of precedents...” (Burke 147). The female writer seems to have more freedom to move about the text once she is able to embrace her authorial identity. Alice Jardine suggests that women’s freedom from ‘male repetition’ is perhaps one of the reasons why there is a “fresh energy to feminist criticism” (181). Women, once they have accepted their power to write and understand that their version of Authorship differs from that of men can embrace that difference and discover that being unconstrained by tradition allows

them to “leave the repetition behind, feel that they are charting an unknown territory which, at the same time, is strangely familiar” (Jardine 181).

Writing, for the female, had very simple origins. Generally the girl was introduced to writing via the domestic art of sampler making. A sampler most often consisted of “a representation of the alphabet, the first nine numbers, and either a monogram or an autograph” (Gilbert 32). Figure 3 is an example of this type of sampler.

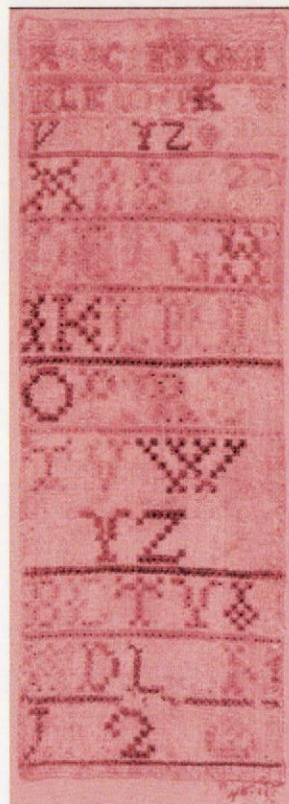


Fig. 5: Sampler. British or American Weave. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The needle and the pen seem like they had similar functions in women’s writing except that the needle was more attainable and acceptable, allowing women much more freedom to create crafts rather than books. In fact, Gilbert and Gubar note somewhat

ironically, "...when women have not used a needle as a pen, they have needed to needle the world with their pens" (Gilbert 32). Figure 6 is by Herrade of Landsberg who drew the women of her convent, placing each picture under the woman's name, thus "expressing the urgency of the signature" (Gilbert 32).

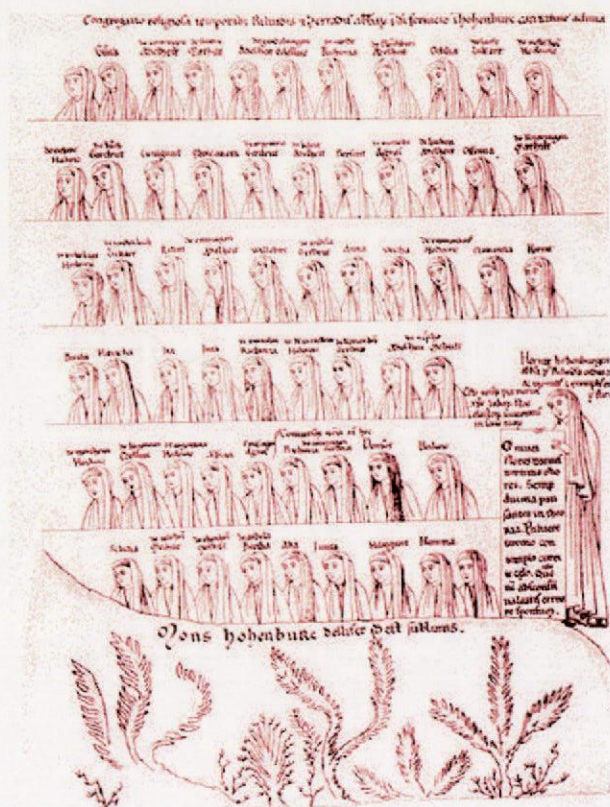


Fig. 6: Herrade of Landsberg. Rpt. Gilbert and Gubar (36)

Craftswomen, whether they were scribes in convents, girls learning to sew, or modern artistic seamstresses, seem to have always drawn on some form of a signature as mark not only of their skill, but of their very identity.

The alphabet sewn so exactly in those samplers is not something easily grasped for women. The alphabet, so easily understood and owned by males, is, to the

female, something that has the potential to "make women feel stupid" while it also seems to "stupefy patriarchal consciousness" (Gilbert 42). Men, on the other hand, do not suffer this burden of stupidity and do not consider the patriarchal consciousness, instead viewing themselves "as inheritors of both the authority and the inexorability of the traditional alphabet" (Gilbert 41). For the female, the alphabet is always something foreign, something to first be grasped and then understood in a sense that has not been perceived as native to femininity. The alphabet is difficult from the female point of view because "its origins... its shapes, its sequences and its inheritance often appear ambiguous, even bizarre suggesting that they experience... an 'anxiety of authorship'" (41). The alphabet is the foundation for all of writing and authorship. If the alphabet is mysterious, the act of writing, the identity of author, becomes even harder to achieve. Not only must 'fundamental' traditions be conquered but also basic mechanics. Women find themselves in a problem that is multi-faceted and difficult to escape. Gilbert and Gubar sum up the problem in this manner, "...the fact that the development of writing made possible not only the widespread pronouncement but also the long-term perpetuation of power would inevitably associate the alphabet with the ineradicable lineaments of a history that has always silenced and excluded women" (Gilbert 23).

Feminist Criticism is carefully examining the female voice and creating new traditions and theories that do not involve silence and exclusion. The need for and problems existing in authorship can perhaps be explained thusly, "for as soon as we exist, we are born into language and language speaks (to) us, dictates its law, a law of death: it lays down the familial model, lays down its conjugal model, and even at the

moment of uttering a sentence, admitting a notion of 'being,' a question of being, an ontology, we are already seized by a certain kind of masculine desire, the desire that mobilizes philosophical discourse" (Cixous 166). Feminist Criticism is trying to both understand the 'masculine desire that mobilizes discourse' and change that discourse to one where the female voice and the female author can also achieve identity.

CONCLUSION

Writing and authorship have had and continue to have a substantial impact on culture as a whole. Trends and traditions in authorship differ greatly over time, yet, some fundamental themes remain the same. Throughout time and tradition each technological or authorial development utilizes 'building blocks.' The scribes used pictograms, which lead to the development of a writing system. Cadmus plants dragon's teeth in the fertile earth, watches fully-grown men spring up and battle one another, and seeds his city with five essential citizens. The Cadmus myth illustrates the male and female versions of war, showing very clearly that the woman, when fighting against a man armed with literary potential, always loses. Cadmus' story also has a close linkage with the five vowels and the plow, which tilled up solid rows of earth and provided fruition in much the same way a pen slashes across the blank page and gives birth to the author. Finally, Chaucer utilizes Ovid's established works and the *Roman de la Rose* to revert to pictograms and draw pictures of legitimacy for himself and his audience. Chaucer's building blocks are unique from the other as he is the only one who has the opportunity to build on the advances achieved by all the other building blocks stacked one atop the other. The murals on the walls, in Chaucer's work, are a rich celebration of the oral and literary past of authors already well established in their identity. The walls also serve as a tribute to the tradition of pictographic writing while still clarifying a Chaucer's own authorship and its validity. Because Chaucer's predecessors utilized building blocks, and via them carved out writing and authorial traditions, that Chaucer

was able to not only achieve Authorship, but also self-awareness of his identity as an author. Women writers had much more humble origins than dragon slayings and dreams. Instead women participated in the domestic arts creating little pieces of literature and signature. These crafts, samplers taught to young girls, were some of the earliest examples of female exposure to the male dominated alphabet. This simplistic type of authorship was seen as non-threatening and was therefore encouraged. However, women, by signing their crafts, began to carve out a piece of authorial identity with their needle. For women, the needle acted as the pen in much the same way the plow did in the Cadmus myth. The links between the stages of authorial development are evident and numerous. After the physical and mythological development of writing, every succeeding stage relied somewhat on the stage before it for both technical and traditional developments, weaving a web of solid methodology in its wake.

Synthesizing the stages of development results in the definition of the authorial role. Thus, the role of the author and the evolution of authorship can be defined by combining the various phases of authorial development. In this cycle of development the physical realities, of writing, both male and female in origin, begin to combine with the mythical origins of authorship, as well as the medieval, the modern, and the feminist criticism. These characteristics build on one another and form a cohesive thesis on the characteristics necessary to produce authorship. These holistic characteristics include:

(1) The gift of language is inherent in the process of writing. The author must exhibit an understanding and ownership of language itself.

- (2) One must be able to translate that language to a representational writing system
- (3) One must develop a simplified writing system or alphabet. Or perhaps one can build upon a previous cultures alphabetic technology, adapting it for his own uses.
- (4) One must usurp the feminine monopoly on self-perpetuation. The male must sublimate the female role in culture and learn to use his pen to give birth to his own, unique legacy.
- (5) One has an established patriarchal right to write through the historical journey of the author. Eventually women writers rebel against this patriarchal superiority and the feminine voice is established.
- (6) One must have identity and lineage grows to monumental importance as it is repeated rigidly and repetitively. While the proffering of identity in this manner is adhered to faithfully, order is established as well as validity. Generational identity is confirmed.
- (7) The author frequently seeks to enjoin and develop his own personal identity and that of society through the text. Yet conversely, identity will be used to define the text by transposing thoughts and ideas formed in society and by the "stout heart" (Warner 8) of the Author. Thus, the text defines the author and the author defines the text.
- (8) The female writer stands outside the male-dominated realm of authorship until she grasps her own right to authorship, realizes she is not constrained by the same traditions as male authors, and develops her own voice and distinctly unique method of writing.

The role and cultural importance of the author has always been and continues one that is often questioned and reviewed by society, but nonetheless fundamentally ingrained

and accepted. The author defines, anchors, and produces culture. The author is responsible for their text, and yet, as Barthes demonstrates, the author must also find some way to give birth to the reader. Authorship is the source where culture looks to see a reflection of them and from that develop a reflection of society as a whole. Authorship is one of society's most necessary positions, for when the author is not available or is unidentifiable, society becomes uncomfortable. The author plays an integral role in many of society's most treasured areas, including education, family, and politics. This project seeks to show the evolution of this movement in authorship from divine, to "other-worldly", like that seen by Chaucer's dreamer, to being analyzed by literary critics, to finally one of self-consciousness of one's own literary style.

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